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021647Z Apr 05

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000503

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/W  
STATE FOR CA/OCS/SDENYER  
STATE FOR EB/ESC/IEC/ENR/BLEVINE  
STATE FOR DS/IP/AF  
STATE FOR INR/AA  
STATE PASS DOE FOR DAS JBRODMAN AND CGAY  
STATE PASS TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS AND SRENENDER  
STATE PASS DOC FOR PHUPER  
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD  
STATE PASS OPIC FOR CDUFFY  
STATE PASS TDA FOR BTERNET  
STATE PASS EXIM FOR JRICHTER  
STATE PASS USTR FOR ASST USTR SLISER  
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/02/2015

TAGS: EPET EINV CASC PGOV ASEC MOPS NI

SUBJECT: TIDEX STRIKE CONTINUES; TENSIONS INCREASE, BUT  
SOME STRIKERS WANT TO RETURN TO WORK

REF: A. LAGOS 494

1B. LAGOS 502

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for Reasons 1.4 (D & E)

Summary

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11. (C) Striking Tidex employees continue to prevent Tidex vessels and non-Nigerian crew members, including thirteen AMCITs, from leaving the ports of Onne, Escravos and Brass. The attempt by a Cameroonian-crewed ship to depart Onne on 1 April appears to have increased tensions. Strikers made threats against a captain and chief engineer if they attempt to move any vessels. However, there were no injuries or property damage reported as a result of the attempted departure. The Nigerian Navy is considering making overtures to the strikers on April 3 to allow two Cameroonian ships to leave. Escravos strikers have requested permission from their unions to return to work. Mission continues to speak with federal, state, labor, and military contacts to resolve the situation peacefully.

Departure of Cameroonian Ships a Point of Contention

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12. (C) The Cameroonian captain's attempt to move his vessel on April 1 was unwise, and appears to have raised the overall level of tension. The Captain of the Princess Tide reported to Tidex that six union members visited him and threatened him and the Chief Engineer if he started his engines. The Mobile Police report they heard strikers discussing the use of explosives to damage the vessels if moved. There were no injuries or property damage reported as a result of the attempted departure. There have been no visible signs of the strikers having weapons or explosives, and it very difficult to gauge how serious these threats may be. The third country national captain of the Columbia Service has resigned; Tidex management will remove him from the vessel today to allow him to leave the country. Tidex and the Nigerian Navy are considering attempting overtures again on April 3 to allow the two Cameroonian ships to leave. They hope to convince the strikers the all-Cameroonian crews have no part in a Nigerian strike, and are being held against international law. The Consul General continues to caution Tidex management against any actions which might trigger violence from the strikers. Tidex management concurs there should not be any rash action which might cause harm to person or property. Moreover, Tidex Nigeria Managing Director (MD) Bob Vaughn stated that he did not want to initiate any significant action prior to the imminent arrival of senior Tidewater International (Tidex's U.S. parent company) management.

Escravos Strikers Want to Return to Work

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13. (C) Cracks appear to be growing between the strikers in Onne and those in Escravos. Tidex reports the Escravos strikers are now saying they would like to return to work, and have contacted their unions to request permission to do so. (Note: None of the strikers have been paid since the beginning of the strike, and they under some pressure from their families stop the strike so salaries will begin flowing again. End note.)

Mission, Tidex, Continue Outreach

14. (C) Mission continues to speak with federal, state, labor, and military contacts, and to broker similar meetings for Tidex management, to promote a peaceful resolution of the situation. The Minister of Transportation Sekibo has designated an envoy to meet the strikers to assist in resolving the situation. Nigerian Labor Congress President Adams Oshiomole will meet with Tidex officials in Lagos on Sunday. The Consul General is planning a meeting with Oshiomole as well, and is attempting to meet with Dr. Daukoru, Presidential Adviser for Petroleum Resources, this evening in Lagos. Dr. Balogun, Senior Technical Advisor for Dr. Daukoru, has also contacted the Department of Petroleum Resources to request their assistance. Mission has also made contact with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation to request assistance. Tidex is sending in senior management to assist. While Tidewater Senior Vice President for Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East, Reg McNee, has been in Lagos for several days to assist Tidex MD Bob Vaughn, they are now expecting their Executive Vice President for the region to arrive shortly. Tidex has provided schematics to us indicating the location of the vessels within the ports; DATT and RSO will use these for contingency planning.

BROWNE